

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Social Networks in Essay Writing Revision of Second Language Writers

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Public and academic interest in social networks grew rapidly over the past generation (Knoke & Yang, 2008). In all societies, people are linked to each other closely. Many researchers, educational practitioners and scholars around the world are devoted to social network study to support teachers' professional development and enhance student achievement through a variety of collaborative initiatives, such as communities of practice and professional learning communities (Vescio et al. 2008). This study focuses on the revision of English essays conducted by writers whose first language is Chinese (Chinese L1 writers) through a variety of revising activities between Chinese L1 writers and their social network members. Social network theory has been widely used in the research of education (e.g. Moolenaar, 2012). However, little research focuses on how social networks improve revision in the process of second language writers' essay writing. For the focus on the interaction between Chinese L1 writers and their Chinese L1 and English L1 social network members, this study is based on the social network theory framework to investigate social networks used by Chinese L1 writers.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires and interviews

from Chinese L1 writers (N=40) who are currently studying at a mid-sized university in the U.S. Participants including both male and female who are 18 and older were invited to complete the questionnaire. Among the forty participants, four writers were invited to participate in individual interviews to elicit their revising experience, revising activities, process of revising, etc. Results showed that (i) Chinese L1 writers use their social networks in the process of English essay revision; (ii) Male writers use their social networks more than female writers; (iii) In Chinese L1 writers' opinion, the quality of their English essays was improved through revising with social network members; (iv) Chinese L1 writers thought that the form of their English essays was improved more than content.